Vol. VI. Numb. 74

THE OBSERVATOR.

Roger's Sorrow for our Loss of Trade and Shipping. The Causes of the like Loss formerly by the Dutch, *and the Way how they retriev'd it. The Admiral's Power is from the Soveraign and Parliament. Sir* William Temple's *Proposal about our Fleet. The Tackers oppose Sir* John Buckworth's *Election. A tacking Captain, that drank* Sorrel's *Health, broke his Neck not long ago in* Suffolk.

From Wednesday, November 12. to Saturday, November 15. 1707.

Obs. YOU know, *Roger*, we are now by Consent to talk about our Fleet.

Country-m. With all my Spirit, Master; there never was more Need to talk and act about it, than now. 'Tis the Walls of our Nation, and that which has made us more glorious at Home, and formidable Abroad, than all the Land-Armies we were ever capable to raise.

Obs. That's very true, *Roger*; yet I am sorry to find many good People so unconcern'd with the State of our Navy, while they are so zealous for maintaining the Reputation of our Arms by Land. Not that I would have that neglected, *Roger*; but methinks *English*-men seem to have lost their natural Byas, and not to talk or act like themselves, when our Fleet is not the principal Object of their Care.

Country-m. Alas for it, Master! Did every one feel the Effects of the Decay of Trade (which is the natural Consequence of the Decay of our Naval Strength) as much as I do, it would not be so. Time was, Master, when I had such a Rate for the Product of my Lands, that I could not only pay my Master his Rent, and the Government their Taxes on Demand, but I could take my Bottle freely when I came to *London*, and carry Home with me the finest Woollen and Linnen for my Self and my Family. *Joan* and her Daughters, *Jug* and *Kate*, could strut in their Silks to Church on Sundays. *Tom* and *Jack* would neither go to Church or Market without their Hair powder'd, and their fine Cravats, nay, and Knuckle-Clouts too, Master, would I have suffer'd it. And *Joan* would look sowre, if we did not bring Home Raisins and Currans enough to make Plumb-puddings and Minc'd-pies against a good Time. But now, Master, we are glad if we can have Milk-porridge, and now and then a piece of salt Beef or Pork; and if we can reach to a Goose or two at *Christmas*, and a Leathern Jack-full of *October*, we think our Selves Princes and Princesses; and are glad if we can have but coarse Woollen and Linnen, so it be clean. I wish with all my Soul, Master, we don't come to Bread and Small-Beer, and to the Parish at last.

Obs. Don't indulge Melancholy, *Roger:* We are not yet come to that. Our glorious Queen, and her wise Senate, may fall on proper Measures to retrieve our Naval Glory. The *Dutch* Naval Affairs were in a worse Condition than ours, and yet, by due Care, they retriev'd them.

Country-m. How does that appear, Master?

Obs. Van Aitzma, the *Dutch* Historian formerly mention'd, *Roger*, says, That on the 18th of *Jan.* 1630. the States of *Holland* remonstrated to the States General, "That the Strength, Vigor, and Reputa-"tion of their State by Sea, was wholly decay'd, "and their Navigation signally diminish'd; that "many Mariners, for want of Care and due De-"fence, were gone over to the Enemy, and many "more taken and kept in close Imprisonment; "and that the said States of *Holland*, to prevent "such Mischief for the future, had resolv'd, that "they would, from that Time, take as little Care "for the Payment of the Land-Forces, as they ob-"serv'd was taken about the Conduct and Affairs "of the Sea.

Country-m. How did those Disorders happen, Master? I thought the States had always taken more Care, than to suffer such Things.

Obs. That same Historian, and others, inform us, *Roger*, "That those Disorders in their Naval "Management, were occasion'd, 1. By the Prince's "having the Naming of all the Captains and Com-"manders, who were also to be punish'd by a "Council of War of his Nomination. 2. *By the "ill Management of the Prince, and his assum'd Cabi-"net-Council, in Maritime Affairs*, who so little re-"garded the Loss and Complaints of the Sea-men "and trading Inhabitants, that instead of redres-"sing Matters, *they imploy'd the Money granted for "the Fleet, to other Uses.* 3. The Prince and Depu-"ties of the Generality, made it their principal Bu-"siness to pay their Land-Army; and in Case of "any Deficiency, to connive at false Musters. 4. "The States of *Holland continu'd in an awful Reve-"rence for the Prince and some others, who labour'd more "to advance his Interest, and get his Favour, than to "procure the Prosperity of their Country.*

Country-m. All those Causes together, Master, were enough to sink any Government in the World. Would to God that no other People had been guilty of the like Mismanagement. But pray, Master, what did the *Dutch*, to retrieve their Naval Affairs from that woful Plight?

Obs. I partly told you before, *Roger:* "The States "and trading Cities procur'd a Fund of 200000 "Gilders, which is about 20000 *l.* Sterling, to re-"ward such as should take the Enemies Ships of "War; and tho' the People were formerly made "to believe, that the Sea was so wide, that it could "not be clear'd, yet the Cruisers set out by *Amster-"dam*, *Rotterdam*, and the Cities of *North Holland* "and *Zealand*, not only clear'd the narrow Seas, "but the Ocean, and took so many *Spanish* Men "of War, that Insurance to *Rochel* or *Bourdeaux*, "fell from eight or ten *per Cent.* to two or three, "as the same Historians inform us; whereas before "that Time, they stood so much in Awe of the "Prince and his Courtiers, that they durst not "make Use of their own Money to clear the Sea.

Country-m. That was hard indeed, Master.

Obs. It was so, *Roger:* But when Madam *Neces-sity* put them to it, "The States of *Holland* propos'd "to the States General, in presence of the Prince "of *Orange*, That the respective Admiralties should, "as formerly, set out Ships for Guard of the Coast, "and Cruisers; and that four Receivers should be "appointed to receive the Money requir'd to that "End, that so it might not be mix'd with other "Money, or imploy'd to any other Purpose.

Country-m. But are any such Methods of Redress practicable in Monarchies, Master?

Obs. Not in the *Rehearsal*'s *French* and *Turkish* Monarchies, *Roger*; but in a mix'd Monarchy, such as ours, where the Houses of Parliament have a Share in the Legislature, and a Power to enquire into the Administration, and punish Offenders. These, or any other Methods, that the Wisdom of the Nation thinks fit to propose, may very well be follow'd: And my Reason for it, is this, *Roger*, That the Lord High Admiral's Power is not deriv'd

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from the Prince alone, but from the Prince and Parliament together, tho' the Nomination be in the Soveraign. This appears plain from the Statutes of 2. *Ric.* 2. cap. 4. 13. *Ric.* 2. cap. 5. and 15. *Ric.* 2. cap. 3. where we find his Power limited, and put under several Restrictions; and he or his Deputy are liable to Forfeitures, if they meddle where they ought not, by 2. *Hen.* 4. cap. 11. Which Laws were made upon grievous Complaints in Parliament against the Admiral and his Deputies.

Country-m. I thank you, Master, for that Information.

Obs. I must likewise tell you, *Roger*, That Sir *William Temple*, who was a great Statesman, and understood our Constitution very well, proposes in the 3d Part of his *Miscellanea*, p. 52, *&c.* "That whereas the Safety, Honour, and Wealth of this Kingdom, depends chiefly on our Naval Force, a "distinct and perpetual Revenue may be apply'd, "and appropriated by Act of Parliament, for maintaining 50 Men of War, with 10000 Seamen, to "be always either at Sea, or ready in Port, to sail "upon all Occasions; and to be so proportion'd by "the several Rates of Ships, as may serve in Peace, "to secure our Trade from *Turkish* Pyracies, or sudden Insults of our Neighbours; may assert the "Dominion and Safety of the narrow Seas, and "in Time of War, may, with the Addition of 30 "capital Ships more, compose a Fleet strong enough, "with the Blessing of God, and a just Cause to fight, "any Fleet the strongest of our Neighbours can pretend to set out: For I am of Opinion, that 80 "Men of War, well Mann'd, with the Conduct of "good Officers, and Hearts of our Seamen, may "boldly engage the greatest of them, when they "come to a close Fight, which the Built of our "Ships, and Courage of our Seamen, is more proper and able to maintain, than any other Nation "of the World. The constant Charge of 50 such "Ships, may amount to 600000 *l. per Ann.* and if "this exceed the current Charge, the rest might be "apply'd to repair old, or build new Ships. One "half might be appropriated to this Use out of the "Customs, and the other half rais'd by some clear "Tax upon the Houses or Lands of each Parish, collected by the Church-Wardens each half Year; by "them, pay'd unto the Sheriff of each County; and "by him, into the Treasury of the Navy. This "should be fix'd in some Place of the City, and "manag'd by three Commissioners, who should, upon Salaries, (and without Fees) be sworn to issue it out to no other Uses, than those above-men-"tion'd, on Pain of Treason.

Country-m. Master, how much Money and Blood might such Management have sav'd us? We must talk more of these Things another Time, for I must now have a Fling at the Tackers, and then to Bed.

Obs. What brings that in your Head, *Roger?*

Country-m. They are continually set upon Mischief, Master: They swear they will all vote against Sir *John Buckworth*, who is one of the Candidates to succeed Sir *Robert Clayton*, as a Parliament-man for this City; and the Reason they give for it, is, That all the Whigs, *the Rehearsal's Sons of Corah*, are for him. I heard some of 'em curse and damn the Whigs at such a Rate, Master, because they are afraid they will cast the Ballance for Sir *John*, that I am sure, were it in the Power of those Tackers whom I over-heard discoursing the Matter, they would sink the City out of Spite to the Whigs, as their Brethren the Papishes formerly burnt it.

Obs. Their Curses will fall upon their own Heads, *Roger*, but can do Sir *John* and his Friends no Hurt.

Country-m. I wish all such damn-ye Tackers would drink *Sorrel's* Health, Master.

Obs. Why so, *Roger?*

Country-m. Because then we might be in a fair Way of getting rid of them: They would all break their Necks one after another, as their Brother *Dod* did not long ago; and as a Captain in *Suffolk*, another of *Sorrel's* Worshippers, did since, as he was riding from *Havering* to *Thurion*. I'll warrant ye, Master, all those Fellows are sainted in the *Rehearsal's Jacobite* Kalendar.

Obs. You must not be malicious, *Roger*. Good Night.

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